LINUX PICKS AND PANS

Modicia OS Ultimate Comes With Cool, Unique UI Twists

By Jack M. Germain | May 15, 2020 12:49 PM PT | Email Article

advertisement

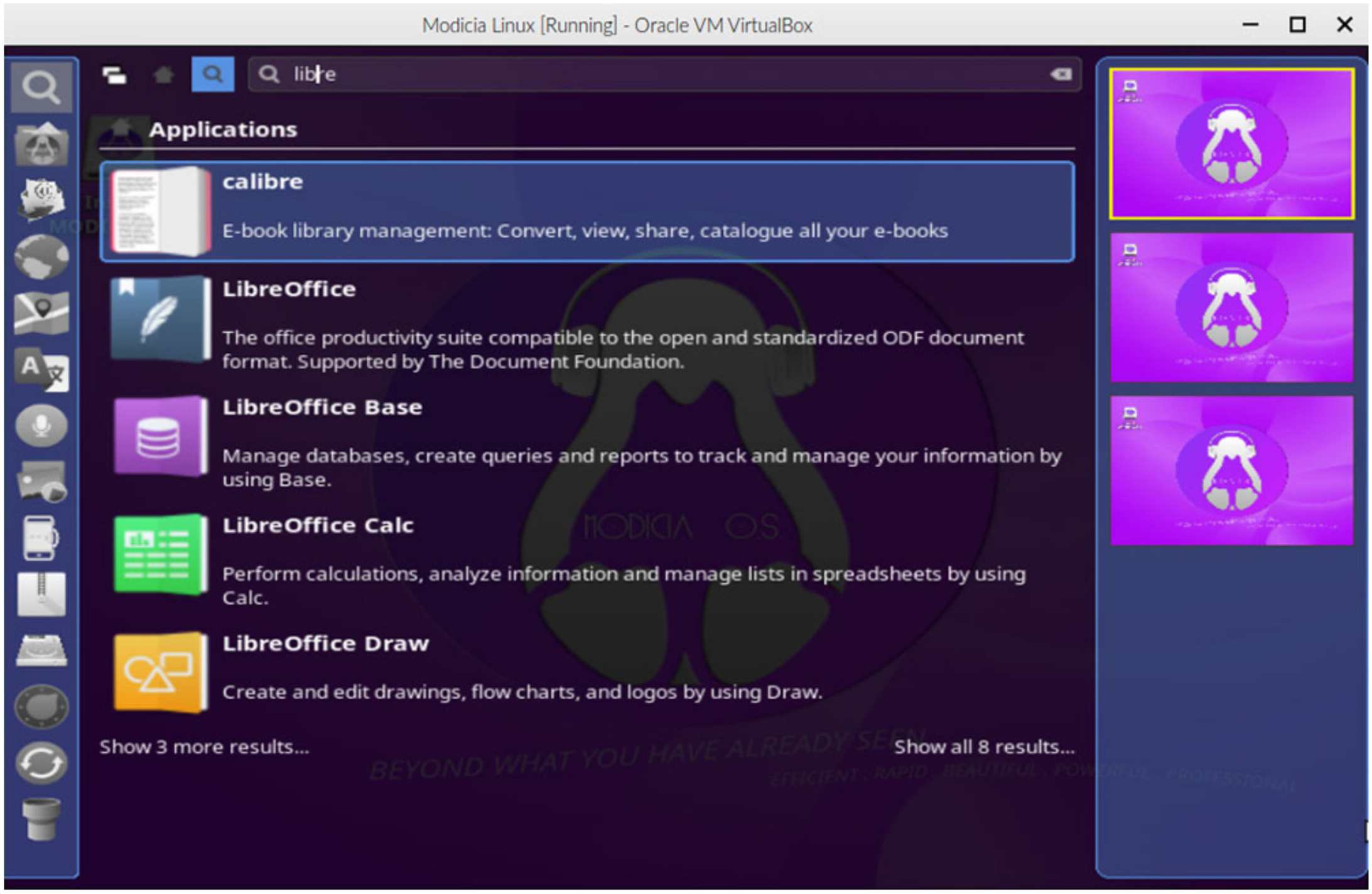
LinuxInsider Rating: ★★★★★

If you are looking for a really cool Linux computing platform with lots of extras and a twist on traditional desktop design, check out Modicia OS Ultimate.

Italy-based Modicia Web Design and Development Company on May 2 released its latest upgrade, Modicia O.S. 20.144. If you distro hop or browse through traditional outlets for Linux operating systems, you probably will not stumble on this gem, but it definitely is a discovery worth finding.

Modicia OS Ultimate is a general purpose optimized computing platform that works right out of the box for use in every field — amateur or professional. It is a workhorse operating system used extensively in enterprise and educational facilities in much of Europe, available in some 25 languages.

It is one of the easiest Linux offerings I have used. It installs without hassles and has no learning curve to get started. It is a great platform for personal and small business use as well.


Modicia Linux [Running] - Oracle VM VirtualBox
libre
Applications
calibre
E-book library management: Convert, view, share, catalogue all your e-books
LibreOffice
The office productivity suite compatible to the open and standardized ODF document format. Supported by The Document Foundation.
LibreOffice Base
Manage databases, create queries and reports to track and manage your information by using Base.
LibreOffice Calc
Perform calculations, analyze information and manage lists in spreadsheets by using Calc.
LibreOffice Draw
Create and edit drawings, flow charts, and logos by using Draw.
Show 3 more results...
Show all 8 results...

A special keystroke delivers a combined view of quick access panel (far left), search window for apps and files (center), and virtual workspace overview.

As a specialty distro, Modicia is a workhorse for those who have a penchant for audio and video tasks. It provides topnotch free software for graphic, video and audio performance with interactive menus. It is no slouch for other office-related productivity tasks either.

This distro comes in one desktop flavor, Xfce. The distro is based on Ubuntu 20.04 LTS. However, the desktop environment is a retooled version of Xubuntu's use of Xfce. So nothing is standard about how Modicia OS integrates the Xfce desktop.

Modicia Web Design and Development Company is no lightweight software development firm just learning the inner workings of open source. The developer team has been dedicated to the spread of Linux since 1998.

The developers use it to produce their own content as multimedia professionals. That is an important distinction. They built a system to meet their own demanding needs. Less Mainstream, More Options I often get questions from readers of my Linux Picks and Pans reviews who are new to the Linux operating systems. Their comments focus on the reliability of less well-known distributions I present.

The questions tend to view the open source communities backed by large entities as the brand names of Linux OSes. They see the smaller, often unknown open source developer communities as being akin to lesser-quality "discount" brands.

You know — the likes of Red Hat's Fedora, Canonical's Ubuntu, Linux Mint, Manjaro, and other popular Linux OS choices are the top quality products. Smaller Linux distros without big name companies backing them — such as, well Modicia OS — are seen as the knockoff varieties that become unusable soon after you try them.

Those perceptions could not be further from the truth. Linux OSes do not fit into a two-category rating system. Rather, Linux distro developers vary from small teams of one or more software engineers to multi-level workers remotely connected.

So the notion of the "best" Linux OS or the "nicest looking" desktop environment is ill-conceived. Linux distributions offer many options and customizations that vary from developer to developer.

What is more important is how a particular Linux distro fits your particular needs. Modicia's Ultimate Uniqueness I first learned about this high-productivity distro a few years ago from a few of my international cohorts who created art and music materials for a large publishing house in Europe. For users specializing in creating educational and editorial materials, Modicia proved to be an ideal fit.

The developers modified each included application for more efficient use and more appealing appearance. Developers further improved the design and the user interface (UI) in this latest release for even better performance. They did this without unnecessarily renaming the core applications or changing the source code — something developers of other distros often do.

If you are familiar with Linux in general and the Xfce desktop in particular, you will find the included software very familiar. You also will find those titles to be improved to the point of looking like new software.

Take, for example, the desktop itself. The developers integrated Xfce to take special advantage of its already fast and light design. The result is a UI that is much more modern, complete and beautiful to see. The designers did not use some in-house sounding nomenclature to change the desktop's name. Apps Gallery The quality and number of included applications are essential to any high productivity operating system. Modicia OS Ultimate has all those boxes checked.

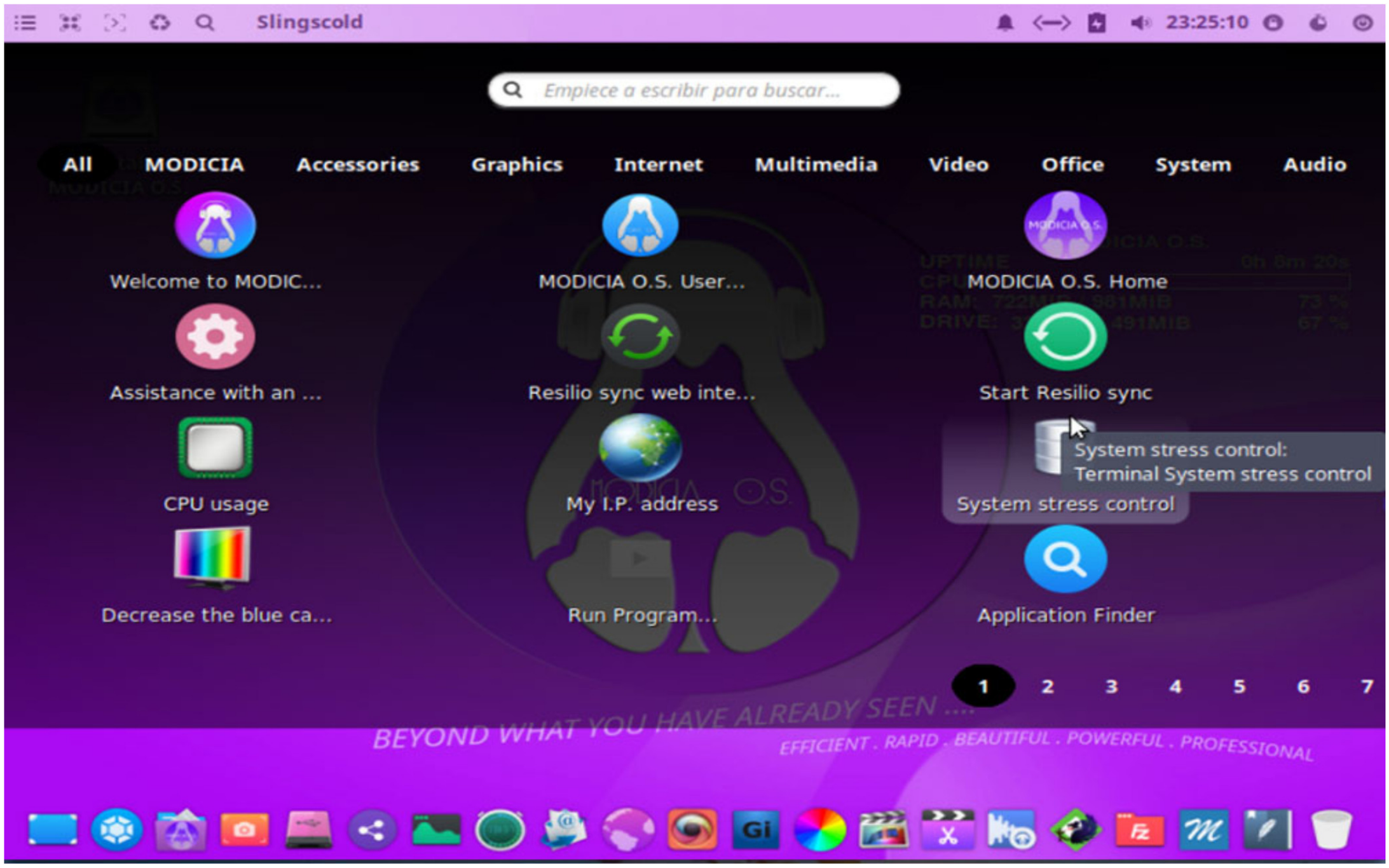
Though Modicia runs the lightweight Xfce desktop, you will find nothing minimal or light when it comes to bundled programs. The developers did not take shortcuts either, by providing just one application to handle video or audio or other types of tasks. They packed the menu categories with topnotch options.

For example, the graphics menu includes 17 different editing and viewing tools. The multimedia menu is filled with 15 titles. The video category is packed with eight high-quality programs. The office tools menu overflows with nearly 20 applications. The accessories inventory includes several dozen choices.

That is just the start. Many more professional-strength system tools and production applications overstuff the included software galleries. Keep in mind that I mean useful products that you otherwise would have to track down and install on your own. I am not talking about software samples here. These are all fully functional, highly reputed professional applications. Landscape Layout The desktop environment gives you the best options. It combines an attractive mix of traditional Xfce design with a modern, functional style.

A bottom dock holds 20 preconfigured icons to launch essential system tools and favorite apps. You can unpin/pin what lives on the bottom dock to your liking.

A Conky display in the upper right quadrant of the monitor shows up time, CPU usage, RAM consumption and percentage remaining, along with hard disk storage status. Unique Configurations A Synapse-like search window pops onto the center of the screen when you press Alt+Space bar. As you type letters, a list of matching installed applications and file names forms under the partially typed search entry.



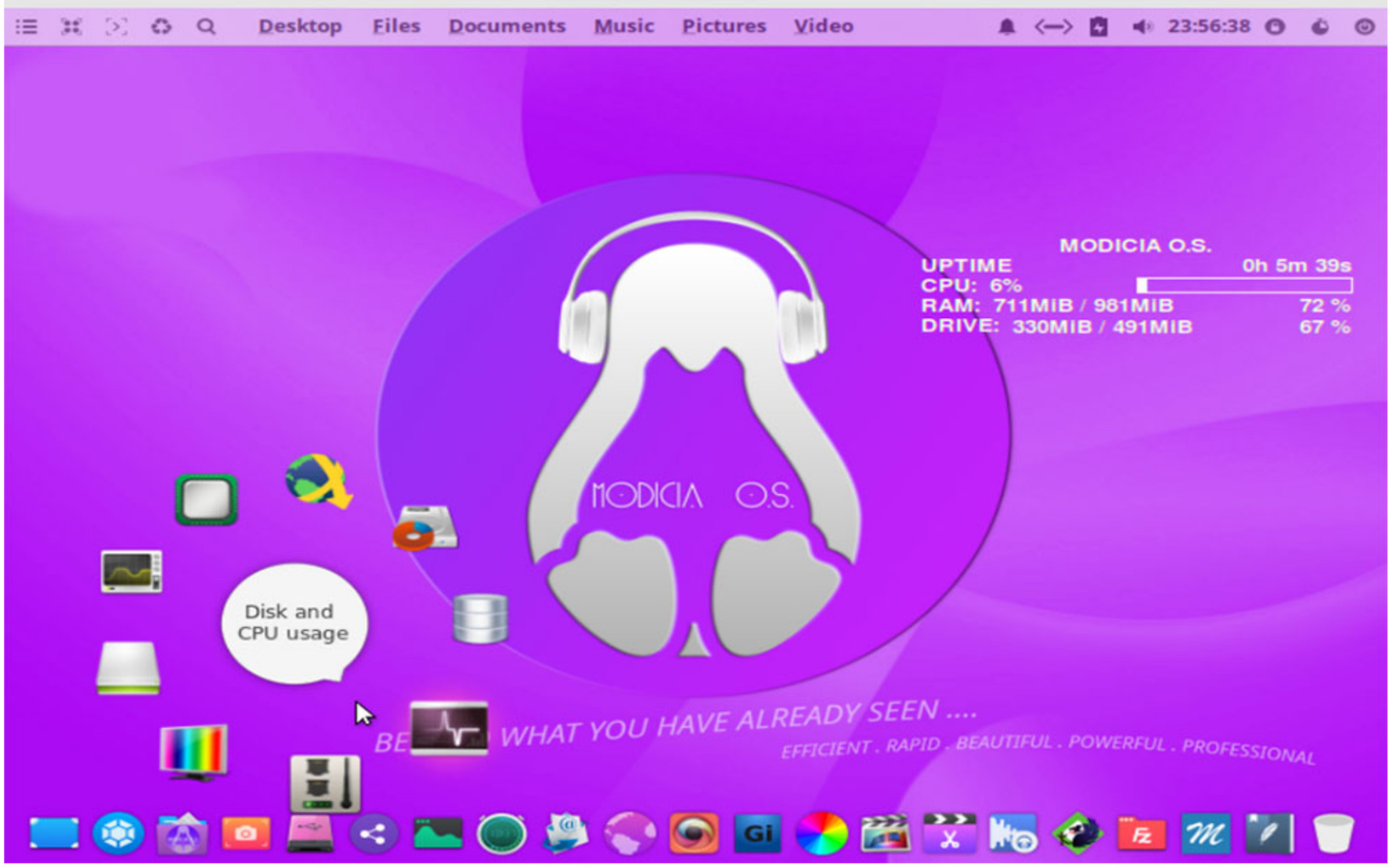
Modicia OS combines traditional with modern, blending a top panel bar with an expanded bottom dock. One of its numerous menu displays mimics the full screen GNOME style.

A panel bar resides on the top edge of the screen. The left portion of the top panel holds launchers for Main menu, desktop view, HTop displays and search. The panel also has icons to open recent files, documents, music, pictures and video.

The left-click context menu, activated anywhere on the desktop, displays the expected cascading system menu. Besides launching applications, you can access numerous system tools and locations.

Unique to Modicia is the ability to activate the windows exposè view. Other workspace navigation buttons are available in both the top panel and the bottom dock. Pressing the Super Key activates the windows, application menus, and desktop thumbnail view that slides out from the right edge of the screen.

Modicia’s design enhances the already flexible menu displays available in the Xfce environment. In addition to the multiple menu access points detailed above, a unique feature is accessible by pressing the middle button of the mouse. It displays a special circular menu with all the utilities from the terminal to monitor the hardware and the operating system.



Modicia OS has a variety of menu types, including a circular display triggered from the left-click context menu.

Performance Factors The unique optimizations built into Modicia OS are the Turbo Boost processors, which are active by default. Also system swappiness is reduced to 10 percent, and programs are 25 percent faster, which the developer notes increases the life of the SSD disk.

Data in RAM memory is compressed to enhance the speed by more than 20 percent when reading and writing, according to the developer. Also, Wine, Samba and Rsync are configured and active.

QT and GTK applications share a similar look as if they relied on a single library. The Windows theme is the same for all applications. The theme, buttons and icons, like the VLC skin, were created specifically for Modicia OS Ultimate.

You will find applications, management tools, and multimedia that do not exist in any other distribution. Everything installed is ready and preconfigured. Bottom Line Modicia OS Ultimate is graphically beautiful, complete, and uses only 450 MB of RAM. It performs well on older computers with more limited hardware resources and flies on more current boxes.

Modicia is filled with updates and improvements to what already was a well-oiled computing platform. New users will enjoy hassle-free computing thanks to the many guides and user groups available via the distro’s website. Want to Suggest a Review? Is there a Linux software application or distro you’d like to suggest for review? Something you love or would like to get to know?

Please email your ideas to me, and I’ll consider them for a future Linux Picks and Pans column.

And use the Reader Comments feature below to provide your input!

Jack M. Germain has been an ECT News Network reporter since 2003. His main areas of focus are enterprise IT, Linux and open source technologies. He has written numerous reviews of Linux distros and other open source software. **Email Jack.**